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Transcript of Statements at on the Military Buildup in Nicaragua

Following is a transcript of the statements on the military buildup in Nicaragua given yesterday at the State Department by Adm. Bobby R. Inman, Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, and John T. Hughes, Deputy Director for Intelligence and External Affairs for the Defense Intelligence Agency, as recorded by The New York Times through the facilities of the Cable News Network:

Mr. Inman: I'm Bob Inman. I'm here this afternoon because I'm concerned and because I'm angry. I'm concerned about insuring that you, and through you the public, has a clear understanding of what's been worrying those of us in the intelligence community for months now. That's the military buildup in Nicaragua and what it portends for this country.

I'm angry because I've watched, over the past couple of weeks, public servants trying to grapple with the difficulty of conveying information while protecting critical intelligence sources and methods and finding that they're standardly greeted with, "How can we believe you, unless you show us all the detailed evidence."

And over the weekend, we were treated to the occasion of the visit of Minister Jaime Wheelock from Nicaragua, who used the platform given him to talk at substantial length about what wasn't happening in Nicaragua.

And as you will see from what we have to say, he lied directly, and no one seemed to challenge that process, at least not in the stories that I read.

And today we're not going to deal with El Salvador and the events there. That will be coming, a series of events later in the week. But we are going to respond today with some declassified intelligence on the nature of the buildup that we've been watching for some time.

Director Casey has responded to our request that he exercise his authority to declassify some manned reconnaissance imagery, or photography, which I believe you will find makes a very substantial, different case from that which you heard from Mr. Wheelock over the past weekend.

We're privileged to have with us today, to present the evidence to you, John Hughes. John has been in the intelligence business now for slightly over 30 years. He is the premier photo interpreter in the U.S. intelligence community. And those of you with a historical interest may recall in 1962,

when John Hughes briefed the evidence, from photography, of the introduction of missiles into Cuba.

I will field your questions after John has finished within the degree that I can. And I'll be assisted by Jim Williams, the director of D.I.A. John, over to you.

Mr. Hughes: Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, our purpose this afternoon is to review some of the sensitive intelligence available to us on the continuing Nicaraguan military buildup. In this review, we will exhibit reconnaissance photography of Nicaraguan military installations and military equipment.

We will also show comparative coverage — that is, before and after — of Indian villages along the northeast border, which have been systematically destroyed by the Sandinistas.

This presentation has two basic objectives, with respect to the Nicaraguan military buildup: first, to describe the nature and growth of Nicaraguan military facilities over the past two years, and the inherent Cuban design they represent; and second, to review efforts on the part of Cuba and other Communist nations to provide modern and upgraded military equipment to the Sandinistan ground — armed forces.

Could we put the lights down please?

Prior to the overthrow of Somoza by the Sandinistas, Nicaragua maintained a National Guard with the strength of about 10,000 men. This force was widely dispersed throughout the country in an internal security role and had very little heavy military equipment.

Size of Military Force

When the Sandinistas came to power, they immediately began organizing regular military forces and a strong internal security police force.

The Sandinista police, similar in purpose to Somoza's National Guard, gradually have been built to a force of five to six thousand men.

The regular military forces have grown even more quickly from a small initial force of 5,000 to a large, active-duty army supplemented by even larger militia and reserve elements.

This combined military force is now

the largest in Central America and totals up to 70,000 men.

Based on the pace of new airfield construction and the development of new ground-force installations, it is evident to us that the Sandinistas are achieving military force levels and capabilities that are in excess of those normally required purely for defensive purposes.

We believe that they have already upset the military balance in Central America. This is especially true since their neighbor to the south, Costa Rica, maintains no standing army.

Let me now share with you the evidence that is available to us.

First graphic please. In any discussion on the Sandinista military buildup, one has to talk about Nicaraguan military facilities. At the present time, we have confirmed from aerial photography and other sources 49 active military garrisons. The amazing thing about that figure is that 36 of them are new military garrisons since the Sandinistas have taken power. Thirteen of the garrisons to make up the total of 49 are old Somoza garrisons that have been refurbished to accommodate the Sandinistan military units.

Most of these garrison areas are built along Cuban design. In fact, we have evidence of facilities in Cuba that we'll exhibit today that are seen in Nicaragua.

14 Installations

The installations we're going to talk about are shown, or highlighted, here. Fourteen are the ground-force installations. They are not all of them there, some of the main ones, here marked by the military symbol a standing soldier. Fourteen of them, plus four new airfield activities, we're watching very carefully at Puerto Cabezas, Bluefields, Montelimar and near Managua itself. And, by the way, this inset of Lake Managua is enlarged in the upper left, where you can see the town of Managua and the newly established ground-force garrison that we're going to be discussing in the context of today's presentation.

This is Sandino Airfield, the main international field.

As I mentioned a moment ago, all of these take on a Cuban design and character. Let me show you what we are saying on the reconnaissance photography. Next graphic.

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